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TAGS: [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; US WIRETAPPING LEGISLATION; ARGENTINE
FOREIGN POLICY; US POWER IN THE WORLD; 08/06/07

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Weekend international stories cover the new US legislation expanding government authority to listen in on international phone calls and read e-mail messages of US citizens without warrants; speculation about Argentina's future foreign policy, with a focus on the upcoming meeting between Argentine authorities and members of the "influential" Council of the Americas; and the consolidation of US power all over the world.

2. OPINION PIECES AND EDITORIALS

- "Political agitation in the US due to the communication wiretapping legislation"

Ana Baron, Washington-based correspondent for leading "Clarín," writes "If you happen to be an Argentine who usually gets in touch with the US on Internet or by cell phone, just be careful with what you say or write. You should not even make a joke related to terrorism or Osama bin Laden because you could get into trouble."

"The new US electronic wiretapping legislation broadly expanded the government's authority to eavesdrop on international phone calls and e-mail messages sent to the US from overseas without warrants. Even when the e-mail or the phone conversation is within the US for only one fraction of a second, it could be subject to monitoring without a warrant. Furthermore, under certain circumstances, the e-mail messages sent by US citizens abroad will be subject to the same treatment."

"The new legislation, which was approved by the House of Representatives for 228-183 votes, is a clear victory for the White House and for all intelligence agencies, particularly the CIA, the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security. While all human rights organizations believe that this legislation infringes on the right to privacy, 18 Democrats backed it."

- Internal disagreement within Kirchnerism due to Chavez"

Mariano Obarrio, political columnist of daily-of-record "La Nación," writes (08/04) "The Kirchner administration is silently preparing Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's short visit to Buenos Aires, which will have an economic agenda with a low political profile so that it does not cloud the following day's meeting with the top brass of the Argentine Cabinet with the influential Council of the Americas. This institution gathers main US businessmen with business interests in Latin America and the Argentine Government considers them vital to lure foreign investment."

"According to what 'La Nación' was able to know, Chavez's presence unveiled some disagreement between President Kirchner and

presidential candidate Cristina Kirchner.

"The President intends his wife's candidacy to 'change the face of Kirchnerism' so that in the upcoming term of office, productive investment will come to the country from developed countries, among other sources. Kirchner feels he is isolated and worn out in the eyes of those countries.

"According to a high-ranking source from the Argentine Government, 'Cristina would like to adopt a Chilean-style progressive profile.' This means that she intends to ideologically distance herself from Venezuela and get closer to Mexico, Brazil and the US, France or Spain. Hence her international tours.

"Cristina Kirchner does not want to get politically involved with the Bolivarian regime, although she would like to maintain an economic strategic alliance.

"The unwritten agreement between the First Lady and the President means that Kirchner and Planning Minister Julio De Vido will keep their ties to Chavez. Meanwhile, Cristina will carry out a different foreign policy...

"Kirchner and Chavez will sign energy cooperation deals and an agreement for the purchase of bonds for one billion dollars that Argentina needs to honor debt maturities this year.

"There will not be any massive events supporting Chavez that will be organized by the Kirchnerite militants or picketers, as happened on previous trips of the Venezuelan leader to the country.

"... The Kirchner administration wants to prevent the Bolivarian 'circus' from being reflected in Tuesday newspapers when it will attend the Council of the Americas' conference at Hotel Alvear.

"The Argentine Government has given highest priority to the meeting with the institution that gathers the top brass of US businessmen. It will be a fundamental step in showing the 'new face' of the official party's motto 'the change has just begun.'"

- US power"

Centrist "Perfil" newspaper (08/05) "... The remarkable point is that while (US President) George W. Bush is a 'lame duck,' US power in the world seems to be consolidating rather than weakening. During the last two months, the US has reached a deal for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula with the mediation of China. During the last two weeks, Iran has agreed to the return of the International Atomic Energy Agency agents to monitor its nuclear program. Last but not least, UK PM Gordon Brown confirmed in Washington that the US-UK alliance is a priority for the UK... It seems US political power has a support that goes beyond election results and the political power of any president.

"During the second quarter of this year, the US economy grew by 3.4 percent... Basic inflation was 1.4 percent per year, its lowest level in five years... The US corporations' rate of profitability is the highest one during the last 70 years...

"The hub of world power is moving from the Atlantic to the Pacific (Ocean), although the historically decisive critical point remains in the US and is probably located in Southern California. Samuel P. Huntington pointed out 'All predictions of US decline have proved to be premature.'"

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